



**Interstate 90: Interstate 190 to Harlem Avenue
Phase I Study
P-91-128-12
PTB 162/001**

Project Working Group (PWG) Meeting #2

The second Project Working Group (PWG) meeting for the I-90 Phase I Study was held on Friday, September 6, 2013 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The meeting was held at the Chicago Public Library Roden Branch (6083 N. Northwest Highway) which is nearby the project area.

The meeting was conducted as part of IDOT's Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process. The purpose of the meeting was to review and discuss the following project points:

- Review PWG #1
- Purpose and Need
- Review Deficiencies
- Present Potential Improvements
- Discuss Evaluation Criteria and Evaluate Potential Improvements

Invitations were sent to community leaders, elected officials, representatives of public agencies and all stakeholders who attended the first PWG Meeting. In addition, stakeholders who were not able to make PWG #1 but requested to participate in future meetings were also invited. The invitations were sent via email or by regular mail if an email address was not available.

Seven stakeholders attended the meeting:

- 41st Ward Alderman's Chief of Staff
- Village of Norridge Engineer
- Deputy Chief of Chicago Fire Department
- Representatives of CDOT and Pace,
- 2 Resident Stakeholders

A separate meeting was held with the CTA on Monday, September 9, 2013, since they were unable to attend the second PWG meeting.

The first portion of the meeting included introductions of meeting attendees and IDOT and consultant staff. A PowerPoint presentation was shown to recap the first PWG Meeting held on April 29, 2013, to review the finalized project purpose and need and deficiencies, and to preview and evaluate the potential improvement alternatives. The recap of the first PWG meeting included reviewing the final problem statement and stakeholders' concerns along with the actions taken since the first PWG meeting to address the stakeholders' concerns.

During the presentation, stakeholders reiterated safety concerns for pedestrians crossing the Harlem and Bryn Mawr intersection with the I-90 westbound entrance ramp. The CTA did install a fence at the gap in the barrier wall but now it appears that people are hopping over the wall. The Alderman's office has received some complaints about the fence installation. Possible improvements at this intersection will be further evaluated by CDOT and IDOT to address this safety concern. Also, an analysis of traffic, safety and geometric conditions beyond the project limits was suggested by stakeholders to determine whether other elements may be contributing to the safety and traffic operation deficiencies along I-90 from I-190 to Harlem Avenue. The logical termini for the project study is based on I-90 being a transition area between the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway and the Kennedy Expressway and the existing deficiencies are due to traffic movements occurring within the I-90 project limits.

Next, a workshop was held to facilitate an open discussion on the potential improvement alternatives. There are two alternatives for eastbound I-90 and two alternatives for westbound I-90. For each travel direction, an alternative with a Collector-Distributor road (CD road) between I-190 and Cumberland was developed as well as an alternative without a CD Road. This resulted in the following alternatives:

- Eastbound Alternative 1: with CD Road
- Eastbound Alternative 2: no CD Road
- Westbound Alternative A: with CD Road
- Westbound Alternative B: no CD Road

For all of the alternatives, one auxiliary lane would be added in each direction between Cumberland Avenue and the Harlem Avenue western ramps so the mainline would be 4 lanes.

Each eastbound alternative could be combined with either of the westbound alternatives since the travel directions function independently. However, for continuity, the project team presented aerial plots of two possible combinations: Alternative 1A, which shows CD roads in both directions, and Alternative 2B, which does not have CD roads in either direction. Stakeholders were asked for their thoughts on these potential alternatives which were then recorded on large scale aerial exhibits for each alternative. Valuable input was provided by the stakeholders and interactive dialogue occurred between all attendees. First the workshop focused on comparing the two alternatives for eastbound I-90, followed by a comparison of the two westbound alternatives.

Eastbound Alternative 1 includes a barrier separating I-90 (traffic entering the project area from the Tollway) and I-190 through the Cumberland interchange and reducing the existing I-90 eastbound lanes from three to two lanes at the I-90 and I-190 junction through east of the Cumberland interchange. The proposed Cumberland flyover ramp carries traffic from the Tollway to the Cumberland interchange with only one lane change to exit on the ramp to northbound Cumberland. The two-lane southbound exit ramp allows traffic from the flyover

ramp and I-190 to exit on the ramp to southbound Cumberland without forcing the two movements to merge. The barrier wall and flyover ramp reduce congestion and potential crashes by altering the weaving and merging conditions. The alternative also requires reduced-width shoulders (1' to 2') for I-90 and I-190 along the Cumberland CTA station and parking garage.

Eastbound Alternative 2 has a major convergence of 3 lanes for I-90 and 2 lanes of I-190 to 4 mainline lanes downstream and directs I-90 eastbound traffic onto the Cumberland flyover ramp to access southbound Cumberland. This ties in with eastbound I-190 going to southbound Cumberland as a two lane ramp. A single lane change and weaving movement through I-190 traffic will be necessary for drivers exiting to northbound Cumberland from I-90. The existing pavement section will remain at the Cumberland CTA station and parking garage location with existing shoulder widths remaining as they are today.

Westbound Alternative A includes a barrier separating 3 lanes of I-90 traffic from I-190 and Cumberland interchange traffic. The 2 lane CD road begins just west of Canfield Avenue and provides all movements to and from the Cumberland interchange and I-190 westbound. The northbound Cumberland ramp would enter as the 3rd lane. Two lane changes would be necessary for traffic from the Cumberland entrance ramps to exit the CD road via a left side slip ramp to enter I-90 westbound. The weaving movements would be improved with this alternative since mainline traffic would be separated from the CD road and the speed on the CD Road will be 45mph (a reduction of 10mph from the current speed limit on I-90). The barrier wall reduces congestion and potential crashes by altering the weaving and merging conditions.

Westbound Alternative B adds a 5th lane beginning at the northbound Cumberland ramp. Two lane changes would be necessary for traffic from the Cumberland entrance ramps to continue to westbound I-90 instead of I-190, but this scenario still improves conditions from the no-build option.

The discussion then focused on comparing the two eastbound alternatives followed by the two westbound alternatives. The following comments and concerns were raised by stakeholders:

Eastbound Direction

Stakeholders were concerned that emergency vehicles, law enforcement, disabled vehicles and snow plows would have restricted shoulder access due to the narrow proposed shoulders along the Cumberland CTA station and parking garage. Further, the reduced shoulder widths would limit potential bus rapid transit in the future. A stakeholder suggested that the barrier wall between I-190 and I-90 could end west of the Cumberland interchange and signs could be posted to prohibit I-90 eastbound traffic from exiting to the Cumberland ramps. It was noted during ensuing discussion that removing or ending the barrier wall west of the interchange would likely not resolve the operational deficiencies for traffic merging between I-90 and I-190 and signage typically does not deter drivers' behavior. Another concern with this alternative was the traffic

capacity and public's perception of reducing the existing three lanes to two lanes for I-90 eastbound from the I-190 junction to east of the Cumberland interchange. Reducing the existing two lanes to one lane for I-190 eastbound to maintain the existing three lanes for I-90 eastbound was suggested by a stakeholder. It was noted in the ensuing discussion that traffic studies indicated two lanes for I-190 eastbound are required in order to provide sufficient capacity and two lanes for I-90 eastbound would accommodate traffic demands, and therefore maintaining the existing three lanes for I-90/I-190 EB traffic would not be sufficient to meet traffic capacity requirements.

One stakeholder had a specific concern about potential right of way acquisition at his property which abuts the highway along eastbound I-90 near Canfield. The project team noted that this project is being processed as a Categorical Exclusion, and that no right of way acquisition is anticipated.

Westbound Direction

Stakeholders were concerned about the weaving movement of traffic entering the westbound CD-Road from Cumberland ramps and then exiting the CD road to access I-90 westbound. It was noted in the ensuing discussion that the weaving length between the Cumberland ramps and I-90 westbound meets the minimum design standards because a lower design speed is required for the CD Road than an open freeway system. A further analysis on this traffic weaving movement and potentially lengthening the weave was requested of the project team.

CDOT asked about putting a ramp to westbound I-90 from the East River Road bridge that could eliminate the weave concern for the southbound Cumberland entrance ramp. They also stated to maximize the length of the weaving section for the southbound Cumberland entrance ramp to westbound I-90.

Stakeholders commented that a hybrid Alternative 2A would provide better options for eastbound traffic to access Cumberland northbound and incorporates standard design values including standard shoulder widths to accommodate emergency vehicles and disabled vehicles. Also, this alternative is more likely to be perceived positively since it maintains three lanes for I-90 eastbound at the I-90 and I-190 junction. The westbound CD Road helps separate the I-90/I-190 traffic prior to the Cumberland interchange and the weave for traffic from the Cumberland interchange to I-90 is improved with this alternative.

Cumberland Flyover Ramp (Separate Project)

The Cumberland Flyover Ramp is being designed and constructed as a separate project and not included in the I-90 Phase II design from I-190 to Harlem Avenue. However, since the ramp contributes to the traffic operations and design for the I-90 project, it must be considered during the I-90 study and therefore was discussed at the PWG meeting. I-90 eastbound traffic would

access the proposed Cumberland Flyover Ramp from the current cash lanes on the Jane Addams Tollway.

One stakeholder expressed concern that the Cumberland Flyover Ramp would be connected solely with manual cash lanes, potentially causing traffic delays and congestion on eastbound I-90 at the Toll Plaza in advance of the Cumberland Flyover Ramp. The Norridge Village Engineer suggested the entrance for Cumberland Flyover Ramp be relocated between the I-Pass and cash lanes to avoid this congestion and allow access from both types of lanes. Reconfiguring the I-Pass and cash lanes at the cash toll plaza section was also suggested. Drivers would then be able to access the I-Pass lanes on the right side instead of the cash lane on the right side to enter the Cumberland Flyover Ramp. It was noted during ensuing discussion that IDOT is currently working with the Tollway on toll plaza configurations to optimize traffic operations for the proposed Cumberland Flyover Ramp. This comment will be discussed with the Tollway.

Relocating the Cumberland Flyover Ramp to land between I-90 and I-190 was suggested by one stakeholder for Alternative 2B to provide traffic access to both northbound and southbound Cumberland. It was noted during the ensuing discussion that under this scenario the mainline eastbound I-90 and eastbound I-190 traffic would be constrained to 3 lanes, which is not sufficient to meet traffic capacity needs.

The Deputy Fire Chief had concerns about fire department access to the Cumberland Flyover bridge. Access could be gained from the Des Plaines River Road access to the toll plaza or if the flyover ramp is blocked, the fire department should be able to use I-190 and then go back on the ramp from its entrance. The ramp pavement is 16 feet and the total bridge width is 29 feet which will provide clearance for passing a disabled car.

Overall stakeholders had favorable reactions to the project alternatives. Based on the potential alternatives presented in the PWG meeting, stakeholders voiced support for Alternative 2 for the eastbound direction since it maintains three lanes for eastbound I-90 at the junction with I-190 as well as adheres to standard design values. Stakeholders did not voice a distinct preference for one option over the other for westbound I-90. Stakeholders requested that the study team conduct further analysis on some concerns identified with each alternative and prepare a cost estimate prior to selecting the preferred alternative.

The next step of the project is to review the stakeholders' input along with the cost associated with each alternative to select the preferred alternative for each travel direction on I-90. The project team will consider input from stakeholders throughout the process of determining the preferred alternative. A third PWG meeting will be held once the preferred alternative is developed. The Public Hearing will then be held shortly after the third PWG meeting.